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Housekeepers' Chat

Thursday, July 24, 1930

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "A Beefsteak of U. S. Good Steer." From Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Leaflet available: "Cooking Beef According to the Cut."

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What with helping my Next-Door-Neighbor get ready for her South American trip, I've been almost too busy to sleep, let alone think about such good old every-day things as what kind of meat to buy for dinner. So I decided it was high time I called on the Menu Specialist.

"What do you know about beefsteak, Menu Specialist?" I asked in a very brisk, business-like way. The Menu Specialist, I happen to know, treasures a secret ambition to sail the Spanish Main, and follow in the footsteps of Pizarro, and Balboa, and "discover" South America herself. If we started on South American cruises first, I knew even the Menu Specialist would find it hard to be practical. So I repeated my question very quickly: "What do you know about beefsteak, Menu Specialist?"

"It's positively uncanny, Aunt Sammy, the way you ask questions sometimes," the Menu Specialist responded. "A regular mind-reader you are. Why, here I am this minute planning a radio talk about beefsteak, which Mr. Davis and I are going to give."

"Do you know Mr. W. C. Davis, the meat grading specialist? If you don't, Aunt Sammy, I'll see that you meet him. Mr. Davis has been working on quality grades for meats for the Department of Agriculture for 14 years. He knows good beef when he sees it, no question about that. I can tell you. The U. S. grades for meat that he is helping to work out ^{are} certainly going to be a great thing for the housewife."

Then the Menu Specialist told me just what she and Mr. Davis were going to say in their talk. Better still, she told me I might pass it on to you. Here's the gist of it as told by the Menu Specialist---Miss Ruth Van Deman is her real name--- and Mr. W. C. Davis.

"A few mornings ago I was out shopping for a beefsteak to serve to some extra special company we were having at our house that day," Miss Van Deman said. "As I stood waiting my turn in the meat market, I looked through the glass door of the cooler. On one of the large cuts of beef, I saw something that caught my eye at once. On this beef was stamped U. S. good steer, U. S. good steer, the same words over and over again, all the way across the cut. For a second I was puzzled, then I realized that this

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem.

2. In the second part, we consider the case of a single particle.

3. The third part is devoted to the case of a system of particles.

4. In the fourth part, we consider the case of a continuous medium.

5. The fifth part is devoted to the case of a system of continuous media.

6. In the sixth part, we consider the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

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26. In the twenty-sixth part, we consider the case of a system of particles and continuous media.

must be the Government graded beef I'd heard about, but hadn't seen on sale in my meat market before. I bought my steak of U. S. good steer. When my guests spoke particularly about the steak that evening, I explained it was U. S. graded beef. Then they fired more questions than I could answer. So I had to call in Mr. Davis. 'What would I or any other homemaker understand,' I asked him, 'when we see U. S. good steer stamped in purple ink like a ribbon across a piece of beef?'

"U. S. good steer," Mr. Davis answered, "is a quality term. You were following the right lead when you bought your steak from a Government-graded piece of beef."

"There are six other grades of beef: U. S. prime, which is the highest quality, followed in order of excellence by U. S. choice, U. S. good, U. S. medium, U. S. common, U. S. cutter, and U. S. low cutter. U. S. choice, good, or medium are good enough for most of us."

"You notice I say U. S. before everyone of these grades," Mr. Davis continued. "This is to make clear that these are the Government grades, not private trade marks used by some of the meat packers. Also these meat grades are not to be confused with the little round purple stamp that we have seen for many years on all kinds of meats offered for sale. The round purple stamp is Uncle Sam's guarantee that the animal was healthy and its meat wholesome. The U. S. Inspected mark has nothing to do with quality."

"How did the Government work out these meat grades? What points do you grade beef on?" Miss Van Deman asked Mr. Davis next.

"Fatness is one of the main things," said Mr. Davis. "It's queer, but lots of people, when they go into the meat market to buy beef, want a lot of lean and just as little fat as possible. Now, good beef doesn't grow that way. There must be enough fat to make the beef tender and juicy. The fat on good beef usually is white or slightly creamy, and small particles of fat are distributed through the lean. This is called marbling. You just can't have nice tender beef unless it shows some fat."

"A lean steak with a narrow rim of butter-colored fat is just as poor a buy as a skinny blue-fleshed chicken. White or cream-colored fat, and plenty of it, is the thing to look for when you buy beef."

"Another point of importance in the eyes of the meat judges is general contour of the carcass. Other things being equal, blocky compact carcasses grade high. A rib roast, for instance, of high quality is thick and full. It has a high percentage of meat to bone, and this means less waste when it is carved on the table."

"On the butcher's block such meat cuts smoothly and evenly and its texture is firm. Cut surfaces hold together, and the rich red color of the lean is in striking contrast to the firm white fat."

"One of the greatest helps to the homemaker in buying graded beef, is that U. S. Government grades for beef are the same the country over. What is 'good steer' in Portland, Oregon, is 'good steer' in Portland, Maine. Before long graded and stamped lamb and other Government-graded meats may be had in retail stores everywhere. Last Thanksgiving and again

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at Christmas, U. S. graded turkeys came onto the market. Turkey growers as well as turkey buyers liked the grading system," concluded Mr. Davis.

Now that we have heard what kind of beef to buy, the next thing of course is how to cook it. For when it comes to good beef on the table, there is almost as much in cooking as in grade. Do you have the leaflet, "Cooking Beef According to the Cut?" It gives recipes and directions for steaks and roasts from the tender and less tender cuts. Just write to the Bureau of Home Economics, Department of Agriculture here in Washington, and they will send you the beef leaflet free.

I thanked Miss Van Deman, and went away feeling that there is something new to be learned, even about an ordinary beefsteak. And I must remind my Next-Door Neighbor to be on the look-out for new ideas about beefsteak, while she's in Argentina.

Friday: "Salad Meals."

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